



Combat operations begin in Tall Afar

By Pfc. James Wilt
82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs

TALL AFAR, Iraq — Approximately 700 paratroopers from the 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, arrived here Sept. 11 and immediately began combat operation in the evacuated city.

The paratroopers, working with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, are attempting to bring the troubled city under control before the upcoming constitutional referendum in October and the national elections in December.

The unit has been conducting patrols and searching homes in the nearly deserted city, as well as questioning the few local residents who failed to leave. The city was emptied of people prior to the operation.

The paratroopers arrived in the city ready to fight, but opposition was far less than what the newly-arrived Soldiers had expected.

“It was less resistance than we had anticipated from the [intelligence] reports we received,” said 2nd Lt. Steve S. Taylor, fire suppression officer for Company B.

Even with the lack of opposition at the onset of the mission, the paratroopers are prepared to face any upcoming challenges when the local populace returns to their homes.

“Once these people start moving in, we’re going to have a lot more responsibilities, and we’re going to have to keep our guard up ... not all of these people coming back are the good guys,” Taylor said. “We just have to keep our guard up, make sure we get out there and conduct patrols.”

As temporary residents of the city, the “White Falcons” will strive to build friendly relations with the people of the war-damaged city, Taylor said.

The 2/325 hopes the future relationships it builds will help identify any remaining insurgents, he added.

To help build those relationships, making repairs and cleaning up the city will be some of the mission focuses for the paratroopers during their stay here.

“There is a lot of damage to the city and their homes. Now we have to help rebuild it,” Taylor said.

The White Falcons already completed a portion of their mission here — they made the city safer.

“We did the best we can on getting rid of all the bad guys, cleaning up the [improvised explosive devices] and the booby traps,” Taylor said.

In the first four days of the operation, the 2/325 found seven IEDs, said Capt. Jonathan Norman, the battalion intelligence officer.

Several elements of the battalion also found weapons caches and extremist propaganda, Taylor said.

The length of the paratroopers’ mission here is undetermined. They will stay in the city as long as the situation calls for but are able to relocate to other parts of the country.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Neill A. Sevelius

An Iraqi boy plays with a camera while Cpl. Kevin N. McCall watches during a patrol in Hit, Iraq, Sept. 8. The Marines of Regimental Combat Team 2 conduct counter-insurgency operations with Iraqi Security Forces to isolate and neutralize anti-Iraqi forces.

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IA conducts first independent operation

Story and photo by Sgt. Matthew Acosta
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq — “I thank Coalition Forces for all you have done for us, training and conditioning my men to get them where they are now — able to plan and execute independent operations,” said Col. Dakhal Hassan Mohmoud, commander of 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division.

Since the war in Iraq began, Iraqis have been aiding in the war on terror and providing intelligence to Coalition Forces as well as taking an active part enlisting in the new Iraqi Army, including some Soldiers of the former regime. Iraqi Army Soldiers have now become proficient in conducting combat operations and have executed an operation using a battalion of Iraqi troops Aug. 16.

“Due to intensive training by American Forces, the 1st Bn., 1st Bde. Soldiers are now proficient enough to plan and conduct independent operations on the battalion level,” said Lt. Col. Todd Wood, commander of 2nd Bn., 7th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Liberty.

These Iraqi Soldiers have been training and conducting operations combined with Coalition Forces since the effort to stand up the Iraqi Army had begun. While developing into a fighting force,

they were working toward training, planning and conducting independent operations as part of the handing over the country’s security from the Coalition Forces to the Iraqi Army.

“The battalion developed a list of people they wanted to question,” Wood said. “They also developed a plan of action, rehearsed the mission and executed the mission successfully, according to the plan.”

The Iraqi Army intelligence personnel began gathering intelligence on terrorist activity in and around the main and alternate supply routes in Tikrit.

“According to our intelligence sources, the target was a neighborhood where several old regime Iraqi army officers lived, who are suspected of planting improvised explosive devices on the main supply routes,” said Iraqi Army Capt. Mueen Shehan, intelligence officer for 1st Bn., 4th IAD.

For the first time since the war started, an Iraqi battalion-sized element conducted independent operations backed up by Coalition airpower and fire support.

“They haven’t developed artillery assets yet,” Wood said. “And they couldn’t communicate with the air support, so if they needed that support, they would have coordinated that through our [liaison officers].”

Wood said they compiled a list of 10 personnel they were looking to detain, and because of the swift execution of the operation, they were able to get information on eight of the suspects and detained the other two. They also confiscated several small arms during the operation.

The Iraqi battalion will continue to conduct company and battalion-level operations within Tikrit and surrounding areas in an effort to keep terrorists at bay.

“This operation is just the start of the Iraqis taking over,” Dakhal said. “And we will not [allow] any insurgents to enter Tikrit. They will not operate freely or they will be in danger.”



An Iraqi Army platoon sergeant from 1st Bn., 1st Bde., 4th IAD briefs 1st Lt. Chad Knowles, 1st Bn., 148th FA, TF Liberty, before a joint counter-IED and combat patrol.

Georgia unit gets first combat awards since World War II

Story and photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

CAMP STRYKER, BAGHDAD — A Georgia Army National Guard unit deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III recently received its first combat awards since World War II.

The ceremony was filled with mixed emotions for the 48th Brigade Combat Team Soldiers as they gathered in the same location where they had previously held memorial services for fallen Soldiers from the unit.

Soldiers were awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge,

“Many of our Soldiers are not here with us,” said Lt. Col. Steve McCorkle, commander of 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, 48th BCT, 3rd Infantry Division. “We honor their memory today and will continue to have ceremonies like this so that we continue to award our Soldiers who fight so bravely on the battlefield.”

One Soldier, Pfc. Justin Hair, Company A, 1st Battalion, 121st Inf. Regt., made Georgia Army National Guard history by receiving three of the awards, recognizing him as the first to engage and eliminate the enemy in combat for the 48th BCT in 60 years.

Hair thwarted the deadly attempts of a suicide bomber to penetrate a security checkpoint with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device June 13.

“Pfc. Hair engaged and killed the enemy before he actually detonated the device,” explained Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Cheyenne Fields of Albany, Ga. “He was unfortunately injured in that attack and is receiving the Purple Heart as a result.”

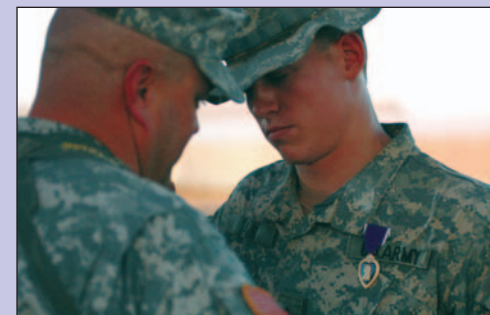
Hair remains humble and does not speak about his actions. However, Fields and the battalion commander know the importance of recognizing Soldiers when a job is done well.

“Although we could have easily given these awards to him at the company level, we wanted everyone to know that this one private, applying his basic Soldiering skills, saved many of my Soldiers’ lives. He deserves to be rewarded and honored for that.”

At least one of the Combat Infantryman Badges was given to a 48th BCT Soldier who had decades of experience under his belt. Decorated with his second CIB, Sgt. Leroy Kirkpatrick, a Bradley gunner, knew this day would come.

“Being in combat arms, things happen,” said Kirkpatrick, of Lawrenceville, Ga. “I knew even before we got boots on the ground that I would get a second award.”

A veteran of the Vietnam War, Kirkpatrick is able to share his experience with his fellow Soldiers. “I’ve got a few tricks up my sleeve. I believe in getting the job done.”



Pfc. Justin Hair was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal by his battalion commander.

Don't shoot ...

call EOD.

0017

IEDs KILL

THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

To learn more about Iraqi and Coalition successes, log on to: www.mnf-iraq.com and follow the link to download this week’s issue.

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PERSPECTIVES

There is always room for beer!

By 1st Sgt. Kelly C. Luster
Combined Press Information Center

When I was asked to write a commentary for the *Scimitar* and was told what the editor was looking for exactly, I gave it a great deal of thought. She asked, “If I could do one thing to improve the world, what it would be?” At first, I thought I might come up with some very original and profound statement about the state of the world or politics or war, etc. I pondered for a while and decided there are just too much sobering and often deep opinion articles about the state of affairs around the world — bombings, tsunamis, hurricanes, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, al-Qaeda and the list goes on. That is all you see. Unfortunately, *news* is a business, and bad news does more for the bottom line than good news. So, I thought back to something I once read and have often heard repeated in different formats, but all get to the same point. I offer this to you as a lighthearted outlook on life.

I stood before my college students with several items in front of me. When the class began, wordlessly, I picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. As the last golf ball fell into place, I asked the students if the jar was completely full. They agreed that it was. So I then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. I shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. When no more pebbles would fit, I then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was. I next picked up a box of sand and poured

it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. I asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous “yes.” I then produced two cans of beer from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. All of the students laughed. “Now,” I said, as the laughter subsided, “I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things — your family, your children, your health, your friends, your favorite passions — things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else — the small stuff. If you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical

checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal. Take care of the golf balls first — the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just “sand.” One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the beer represented. I smiled and said, “I’m glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there’s always room for a couple of beers.”

So what’s the one thing I would do to improve the world? I would offer everyone a couple of ice cold beers.

“Unfortunately, *news* is a business, and bad news does more for the bottom line than good news.”

1st Sgt. Kelly C. Luster
Combined Press Information Center

Nice to meet you!



Staff Sgt. Steven Rinaldi, Military Transition Team noncommissioned officer in charge for 3rd Iraqi Army Battalion, talks with a young boy during a presence visit to the Diyala province by the Iraqi Army.

U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Gul A. Alisan

Scimitar Pulse

If you could do one thing to improve the world, what would it be?

“Spread the word of Christ.”

Paul McNaspy
KBR



“I’d like to see children all over the world be children.”

Air Force Lt. Col.
Chris Wheatley
99th Reconnaissance Squadron



“I would solve this problem in Iraq so everyone could go home.”

Marine Capt. Troy Downing
Marine Forces Atlantic



“Try to bring world peace.”

Air Force Master Sgt.
Willard Victoria
Multi-National Security Transition
Command - Iraq



“Eliminate terrorism.”

Army Maj. Gen. Robert Heine
Multi-National Force - Iraq



“I’d make sure everyone was connected with one religious faith or another.”

Michael Craft
Iraq Reconstruction Management
Office



“World peace.”

Army Staff Sgt. Kristy Madison
Joint Area Support Group - Central



Preventive medicine Sailors keep air wing ready to fight

Story and photo by Cpl. C. Alex Herron
2nd Marine Aircraft Wing

ALASAD, Iraq — For the past 230 years, the Marine Corps has fought wars on foreign fronts in austere environments throughout the globe. The environmental changes experienced when deployed to a new climate and place bring unknown viruses and diseases. That, combined with less than ideal sanitary conditions, can create havoc on a service members wellbeing.

Today, the Navy has preventive health professionals who make it their mission to keep Marines and all service members free from preventable disease. Preventive medicine is giving the Marines of the forward deployed 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing the best gift they can have — the gift of health.

Preventive medicine is made up of a group of Sailors from different units who work together to deal with public health issues. From checking that food is stored, cooked and served safely in the dining facilities to educating Marines on the dangers of heat injuries, this small collection of Sailors helps ensure the combat readiness of the fighting forces here.

“We work to keep people healthy and reduce disease and non-battle injury rates in our fighting force,” said Cmdr. Sharon Wright, the environmental health officer for the forward deployed wing. “We began with a healthy populous and through insect and vector control and good sanitation, we have been able to keep our numbers of sick service members to a minimum.”

The Sailors spend their days conducting inspections around the base. They ensure the safety and sanitation of more than 900 portable toilets, 660 shower units, 600 trash receptacles and countless living areas, food service installations and other locations around the base.

“Parts of our job aren’t glamorous, but someone has to do it to ensure the safety and well-being of the troops,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Paul Ineman, a preventive medicine technician with

Marine Wing Support Squadron 271 from Alliance, Ohio.

The preventive medicine Sailors’ job does not give them a lot of down time. If they are not teaching a class or solving health problems, they always have living quarters or other facilities that need to be inspected.

“Preventive medicine technicians always have something to do,” said Ineman. “There seems to always be another task that needs to be completed, and then we have to prepare our reports on everything we do.”

The reports the team submits are used by their higher headquarters to identify preventable disease and heat-related injury trends.

“We submit reports to the II Marine Expeditionary Force and Multi-National Coalition to track the number of preventable disease cases in western Iraq,” Ineman said. “We also use the information to check how we can take care of certain issues before they turn into real problems. The reports track heat injuries, gastrointestinal problems or anything else that could be considered a preventable disease.”

The ill effect of heat is one environmental challenge the team spends a lot of their time dealing with. Anything from dehydration and heat cramps to heat stroke is referred to as a heat injury. If not taken seriously, someone could quickly fall victim to a heat-related injury that often occurs in temperatures exceeding 110 degrees.

“Heat stress requires a lot of education and constant reminders to drink water often,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Brianna Bernal, a preventive medicine technician with MWSS-271 and Spearfish, S.D., native. “We constantly tell our fellow corpsman to remind their units to drink lots of water while here. Even with



Petty Officer 1st Class Paul Ineman, a preventive medicine technician with MWSS-271, checks the temperature of the food at the serving line in one of the dining facilities in Al Asad, Iraq.

constant education, we still receive a small number of heat injuries every month.”

Other preventable diseases common in this region are respiratory and gastrointestinal infections. The constant supply of bottled water is a regular reminder to avoid the tap water, since the water is not treated like sources in the United States.

Keeping service members healthy and ready to fight is what preventive medicine is all about. Keeping the forward deployed 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing assets in the fight keeps these preventive medicine Sailors on constant alert for anything that may be a threat to public health.

Anaconda Airmen serve as explosive countermeasure

Story and photo by
Spc. Jerome Bishop
1st Corps Support Command
Public Affairs

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq — Small-arms attacks, indirect-fire attacks and improvised explosive devices have been a danger to Coalition Forces since the beginning days of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In response, Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams, like Logistics Support Area Anaconda’s Air Force 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron, EOD Flight have been making the roads safe and keeping unexploded ordnance at bay.

“We respond to any request for any assistance with any kind of explosive device, improvised or not,” said Master Sgt. Michael Bernard, 332nd EOD operations noncommissioned officer in charge. “We also have teams that support forward operating bases, such as FOBs O’Ryan, Normandy, Warhorse, Caldwell and Cobra.”

Since IEDs are the highest risk to Coalition Forces, a lot of focus has been placed on pacifying and destroying these weapons.

“IEDs are our biggest threat out here,” said Senior Airman Eric Charlton, EOD technician, 332nd EOD. “Basically, if it looks like an IED, we get called up. We’ve responded to things like stacks of melons on the side of the road to dead animals. IEDs can be concealed in or look like everyday items. Basically, dead animals pose a threat, because if it isn’t an IED, it could become one.”

EOD personnel are not the only people who need to be aware of their surroundings when out on the roads. Anyone else who happens to encounter an IED needs to know how to react.

“If [anyone] comes across anything that could be an IED, follow your unit’s standard operating procedures, Charlton said. “[The unit needs] to cordon off the area and report up through the proper channels.

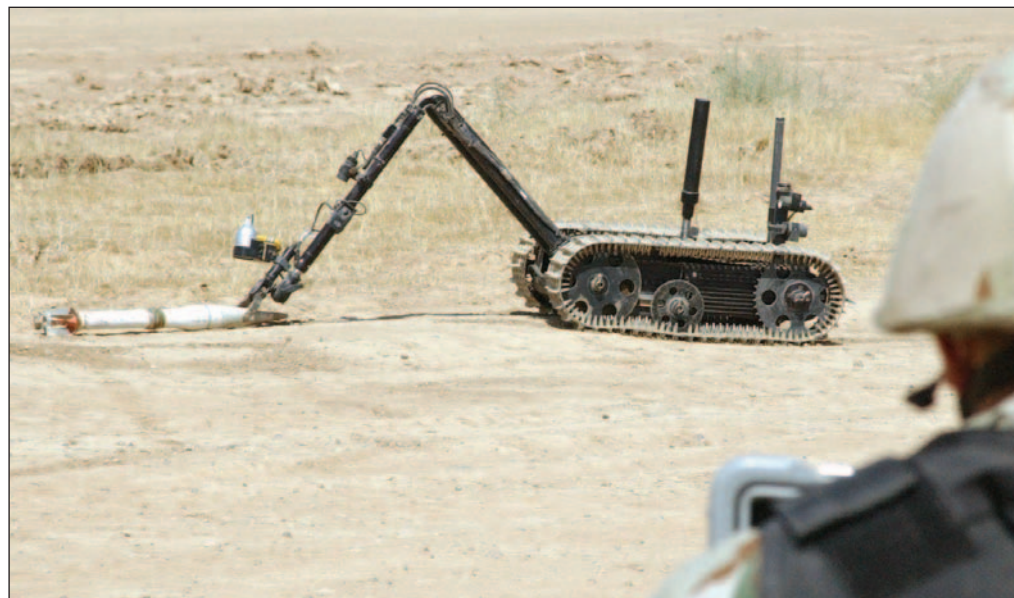
“The biggest thing is not to mess with them,” he said. “We go out sometimes where people have messed with them and thought to ourselves, ‘Why did you do that?’ Thank God they haven’t had anything

happen to them. IEDs are no joke.”

Being in close range of a powerful and often unstable explosive can present dangers similar to the EOD technicians as it would to a targeted convoy.

“The measures we have are our Army protection. We never go out without the Quick Reaction Force,” Charlton said. “We also have security on site which gives us 360 degrees of protection. We always take out our weapons, bomb suits and robots.”

EOD robots, usually equipped with something as simple as a few cameras and a gripping claw, make a great advance in



While not on call, Senior Airman Eric Charlton improves his skills with an EOD robot to practice recovering an inactive rocket-propelled grenade.

the safety of EOD technicians.

“The robots are a means of protection,” Charlton added. “It gives us a safe stand-off distance so we can get up close to the IED without being in danger.”

Expensive and complex equipment is not the only thing that keeps the job of an EOD technician safe during missions.

“The training we do is constant,” Bernard said. “Anyone in the Department of Defense EOD program attends the same inter-service EOD school. Following that each service has its own unique on-the-job training. For deployment to the Iraqi theater of operations, additional “spin-up” training is conducted that helps prepare the EOD techs for all situations we might encounter.”

Any mission concerning IEDs or any other type of explosive ordnance can quickly become a disaster if not handled properly, which is a scenario that EOD technicians keep in mind with every task assigned to them.

“You have a certain amount of control. There are safety measures that we follow, and if you follow them you should be fine,” said Charlton. “When you go out and defuse or blow up something and now it can’t kill anyone else, it makes it all worth it.

“Our EOD motto is ‘initial success or total failure.’ If you mess it up, you’re gone.”

“There’s a certain feeling when you know you only get one mistake, and that keeps you on you toes,” Charlton added. “I wouldn’t do anything else for the Air Force. Our job is a brotherhood you can’t find anywhere else in the Air Force. This job is a blast ... literally.”

Ready to fight: phase crew keeps Purple Foxes flying

Story and photos by
Cpl. C. Alex Herron
2nd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL TAQADDUM, Iraq — For the Purple Foxes of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364, conducting casualty evacuation missions while providing general support for the forward deployed 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing puts a lot of flight time on their helicopters.

Keeping their aircraft in the fight is a big challenge while deployed here in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The squadron combats the stumbling blocks of engine and general wear on their aircraft by conducting scheduled maintenance (phase maintenance) on all of their CH-46E Sea Knights.

After every 150 flight hours, a Purple Fox aircraft is sent to a group of Marines whose job is to take the aircraft apart and inspect its different components for quality and safety. The group of five Marines, known as the phase crew, spends their long days inspecting and repairing anything

from flight controls to the smallest engine component to keep their birds combat ready.

“We break the aircraft completely down, inspect every section and repair or replace what is broken,” said Staff Sgt. Michael Freeman, noncommissioned officer in charge of the HMM-364 phase crew. “We also lubricate and calibrate different parts to keep every piece of the aircraft ready for action.”

The phase crew has worked diligently since its arrival in March and has proven its self-worth by completing 21 phase inspections in the five months HMM-364 has been here.

“It takes an average of 10 days to complete an inspection,”

Freeman said.

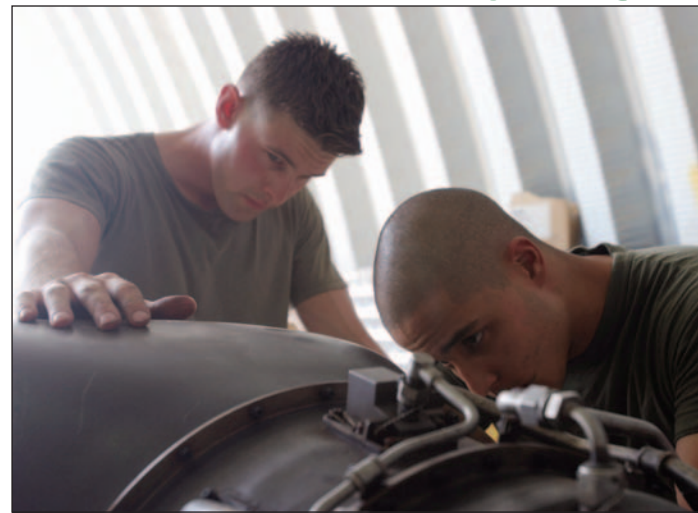
“But our guys have been

able to get some done in as little as four days, which ensures the squadron is able to keep aircraft in the fight.”

The repetitive work that goes along with being a part of the phase crew is a great way for junior Marines to learn the aircraft in a way that cannot be matched anywhere else in the squadron, said Sgt. Ryan Bogedin, a flightline mechanic and Westland, Mich., native. “They can gain a lot of experience by doing the same tasks time and time again.”

“The education you get in the phase crew is valuable,” said Pfc. Timothy Wade, a flightline mechanic and Wortham, Texas, native. “Working just in the flightline shop, you might see a break, and you learn how to fix it that instant. But, if you don’t see it again, you’ll forget it. Here, you don’t have that problem because you fix the same problems over and over again. The processes get embedded in your mind, and you can recall that information a lot faster.”

Serving in Iraq is hard on the Purple Foxes’ helicopters. The aircraft have been in country for 18 months, with different units rotating in on them every time a new unit reports aboard.



Sgt. Ryan Bogedin and Lance Cpl. Edgar Lugo, both flightline mechanics on HMM-364's phase crew, put an engine together after inspecting it as part of a 150-hour phase inspection.



Pfc. Timothy Wade, a flightline mechanic with HMM-364, replaces a piece of safety wire on one of the blades of a Purple Fox CH-46E Sea Knight.

“The things we see more of here are cracks and blown seals — strictly because of the intense heat of the desert and the wear and tear they have received over the past couple of years,” Freeman said. “Ensuring the aircraft are inspected thoroughly and properly is an important job that keeps our aircrews alive and lets the mission continue.”

The Purple Foxes will return to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., in due time, but there is still a lot of work to be done. With the phase crew working hard and staying attentive to what the aircraft need, the Purple Foxes will have no problems continuing to support the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing as they work to help make a brighter Iraq for all of its citizens.

Alaska guard Soldiers execute more than just infantry tactics

Story and photos by Spc. Mary Rose
Multi-National Corps - Iraq
Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, BAGHDAD — Infantry Soldiers from the Alaskan Army National Guard have a defined mission — providing force protection in the Baghdad area. But their mission involves much more than patrols and Baghdad community oversight.



Spc. Jerry Gasperson talks with Iraqi children while pulling security on the streets of a small town on the outskirts of Baghdad.

During their days patrolling the streets or waiting to be called for emergency action, they interact with local families, handing out stuffed animals and candy to the hordes of children who chase after their vehicles and to patients at a local hospital.

“Our main mission is force protection ... but our guys like working with the local people, too,” said Capt. Wayne Mitchell, executive officer of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry Brigade.

The Alaskan Soldiers work 12-hour days, but depending on what their mission is, they sometimes turn into even longer days, Mitchell said.

Outer-perimeter patrols take up much of the Soldiers’ time. They drive around the outer boundaries of the Baghdad Coalition compounds and through towns, such as Al Furat and Iraqi Family Village. While patrolling, they stop suspicious vehicles and search them for any illegal or out-of-the-ordinary items. They learn the areas while scanning the road edges for probable improvised explosive devices.

“We detect and deter possible enemies,” said Mitchell, a native of Juneau, Alaska.

The Alaskan Soldiers also support a quick reaction force on Camp Victory, a team of troops who are always geared up and ready to respond to an emergency outside of the compound.

The unit also observes the progress of

the water systems, sewer systems, school projects, electrical projects and community trash clean-up projects.

The troops are not there to do the work, only to supervise the progress and make sure the contracts are being fulfilled by the Iraqi people, Mitchell said.

“Since we have gotten here, there are areas that have had great improvement,” said Sgt. 1st Class William Schwenke, A Co., 3rd Bn., 297th Inf. Bde., a native of Nikiski, Alaska.

Schwenke pointed to an area outside of Camp Victory as his team was on a patrol where the local people were dumping their household trash. That field is now a clean area with vegetation growing in it.

Both of these missions have great importance, but the troops enjoy interacting with the people in the local communities too, Mitchell said.

“The guys love to help out,” said 1st Sgt.



Sgt. 1st Class William Schwenke, right, and Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Chang check a fighting position outside of a military compound in the Baghdad area.

Dan Randall, company first sergeant, A Co., 3rd Bn., 297th Inf. Bde.

The unit gets donations from families, friends and churches in Alaska that they give to the towns they patrol, Randall said. The Alaskan troops support a hospital and a home where many impoverished children reside, which they call the orphanage even though it isn’t state subsidized.

“They feel good when they get to help out,” said Juneau-native Randall.

Coalition Corner

... highlighting countries
serving with MNF-Iraq



Italy

local name: Italia

The Italian Republic is located in southern Europe, consisting of a peninsula extending into the central Mediterranean Sea and two islands, Sicily and Sardinia. Italy borders Vatican City, Austria, France, Slovenia and Switzerland. Size-wise, it is slightly larger than Arizona.

Italy was one of the founding members of the European Union and traded in its Italian Lira for the Euro in 2002. Italy's 58 million-plus people primarily speak Italian, although parts of the Trentino-Alto Adige region are predominantly German-speaking. Italy also has many regional dialects, which vary drastically from northern to southern Italy.

From the Italian Riviera to Viareggio, Italy's peninsula and islands give sea-lovers endless choices of vacation beaches. Moreover, Italy is home to some of the most famous historical cities in the world. Rome, the capital, is a favorite travel destination with famous landmarks, such as the Basilica and the Colosseum, which dates back to 80 A.D. Milan boasts the title of Italy's financial and fashion capital. To see some of the most-renowned museums and art such as Michelangelo's David, Florence is the place to go. Venice, the most famous canal city, and Verona, the city of Romeo and Juliet, are just a few more among many other famous Italian cities.

Italy is also known for its delicious food. Pasta, which is Italy's national food, comes in countless shapes and sizes and is the main ingredient in thousands of dishes. Pizza, another world-famous food, was invented in Naples in 1773 by a cook named Vincenzo Corrado.

Besides boasting historic landmarks and scrumptious food, Italy is also home to many famous people. Luciano Pavarotti, a world-renowned opera singer, and Roberto Benigni, star and director of the 1998 Academy Award-winning movie "Life is Beautiful," are both from Italy. The Europop group Eiffel 65, whose hit single "Blue (Da Ba Dee)" topped American and European charts in 2000, also claim Italia as their home.

Italy — yet another piece of the Multi-National Forces - Iraq puzzle, dedicated to rebuilding Iraq.

References: www.cia.gov, <http://europa.eu.int>, www.wanderplanet.com, www.kidzworld.com, www.italcultusa.org, www.surf-sun.com, www.italiansrus.com, www.rollingstone.com.

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CHAPLAIN'S TALK

Who Can I Trust?

By Chaplain (Lt. Col)
Thomas A. MacGregor
Deputy Command Chaplain
Multi-National Force - Iraq

"It hurt. It cut me deeply. How could he have turned on me so quickly? I thought he was my friend; I trusted him. Why me? I wanted nothing but his friendship. If I were his enemy, I could see him doing it to me, but not, certainly not, as my close friend."

Aren't these words common to so many of us? Sometimes these words are more specific: "Yeah, my buddy wired me up!" or "We were both messing around, but he said I assaulted him, and I got thrown in here!" or, again, "I was with my friends, and they offered me some drugs and then they turned me in — probably to take the 'heat' of themselves!" Too many of us have had similar experiences. Just when we think we can trust someone, we find we can trust no one. We have been wounded. Stabbed in the back! Cut to the heart! The pain is real — but the doctor's medicine can't take the pain away. The hurt drowns any happiness, and the question echoes in the mind: "Why Me?"

David, Israel's greatest king had a similar experience. In Psalm 55, he laments in verses 12 through 14: "It was not an enemy who taunted me — then I could have borne it; I

could have hidden and escaped. But it was you, a man like myself, my companion and my friend. What fellowship we had, what wonderful discussions as we walked together to the Temple of the Lord on holy days."

David knew the person whom he was talking about; he was really a close friend. They had had good times together. But, something serious happened, and David describes what transpired in verses 20 and 21: "This friend of mine betrayed me — I who was at peace with him. He broke his promises. His words were oily smooth, but in his heart was war. His words were sweet, but underneath were daggers."

David knew it was meant to be conned, to be misled by the fine-sounding words of a pretended friend. Behind the supposed peace was war; behind the promises were daggers. David was betrayed by someone he trusted. What should he do; how should he respond; where should he go — to relieve the pain and anguish he felt? David tells us how he responded and instructs us how we must react in verses 22 and 23: "Give your burdens to the Lord. He will carry them. He will not permit the godly to slip or fall. He will send my ene-



Chaplain
MacGregor

mies to the pit of destruction. Murderers and liars will not live out half their days. But I am trusting you to save me."

King David turned to the only true resource he had — the Lord God Himself. Jesus also experienced the betrayal of a "friend." Judas, whose

name still bears the shame and disgust of betrayal, turned Jesus in to the authorities. In short time, Jesus was arrested, falsely accused, tried and put to death. In His hour of need, Jesus turned to God the Father and poured out His hurt and pain, knowing that only God could help at such a time. He could not bear His sorrow alone. His anguish was so severe, He sweated drops of blood.

You and I must remember the attitudes of both David and Jesus. When we have a friend turn against us, we must take our burdens to the Lord. In God's good time, He will carry out perfect justice. In the interim, He will let none of His godly ones slip or fall. Trust in Him when the sorrows of this life overwhelm you; trust Him to wipe away your tears. He stands ready to carry our burdens. He alone is trustworthy. [Quotations are from *The Living Bible*, Tyndale House Publishers.]

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mosul key terror leaders captured

BAGHDAD — Multi-National Forces, acting on multiple intelligence sources and tips from local citizens, raided a suspected al-Qaida in Iraq terrorist location in southwest Mosul, Sept. 5, capturing the top al-Qaida leaders in the city.

Captured during the raid was Taha Ibrahim Yasin Becher (aka Abu Fatima), the al-Qaida in Iraq's Emir of Mosul, and Hamed Sa'eed Ismael Mustafa (aka Abu Shahed), the organization's West Mosul Emir.

Fatima and Shahed were in a meeting at the time of their capture.

Fatima had recently taken over the role of Emir after Abu Talha was captured in June and Abu Zubayr, who replaced Talha, was killed in mid-August. Fatima had only held the position for 12 days when he was captured.

Fatima supervised and directed the day-to-day operations of the organization and was responsible for numerous attacks against Iraqi security and Coalition forces.

Shahed was responsible for organizing al-Qaeda activities in western Mosul. He was responsible for attacks conducted in the area and also participated in attacks involving small arms and other weapons directed against Iraqi security and Coalition forces. As the leader of one of Mosul's territories, he was in line to succeed Fatima in the event of his death or capture.

The simultaneous capture of both leaders damages the organizational structure of al-Qaida in Iraq's northern network. Fatima and Shahed were both originally from Tall Afar prior to assuming their roles in Mosul. In the past, the

Emir position had been filled by terrorists who were already operating in the Mosul area.

Multi-National Force - Iraq announced the Sept. 6 capture of Dara Mohammad Sept. 16. His alleged crimes include the participation in and the directing of numerous murders and bombings against targets throughout the Kurdish region as well as Mosul. These include bombing attacks on local citizens as well as governmental, Iraqi and Coalition Forces.

Mohammad, as the senior Ansar al Sunna terrorist in Mosul, is also alleged to have numerous terrorist connections in the region as well as with international terrorist groups like al-Qaida.

Soldier's Article 32 investigation delayed

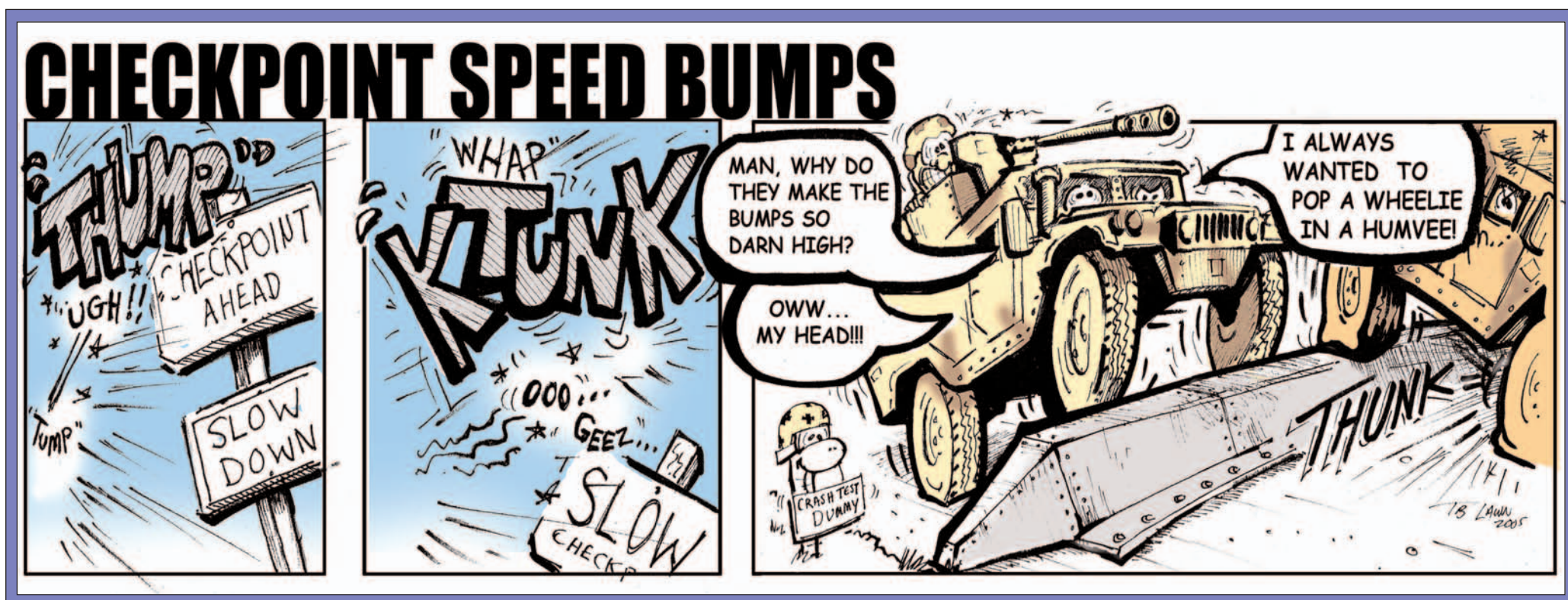
BAGHDAD — The Article 32 Investigation for Staff Sgt. Alberto B. Martinez, formerly of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 42nd Infantry Division (Mechanized), has been delayed.

A new date for the hearing has not been determined.

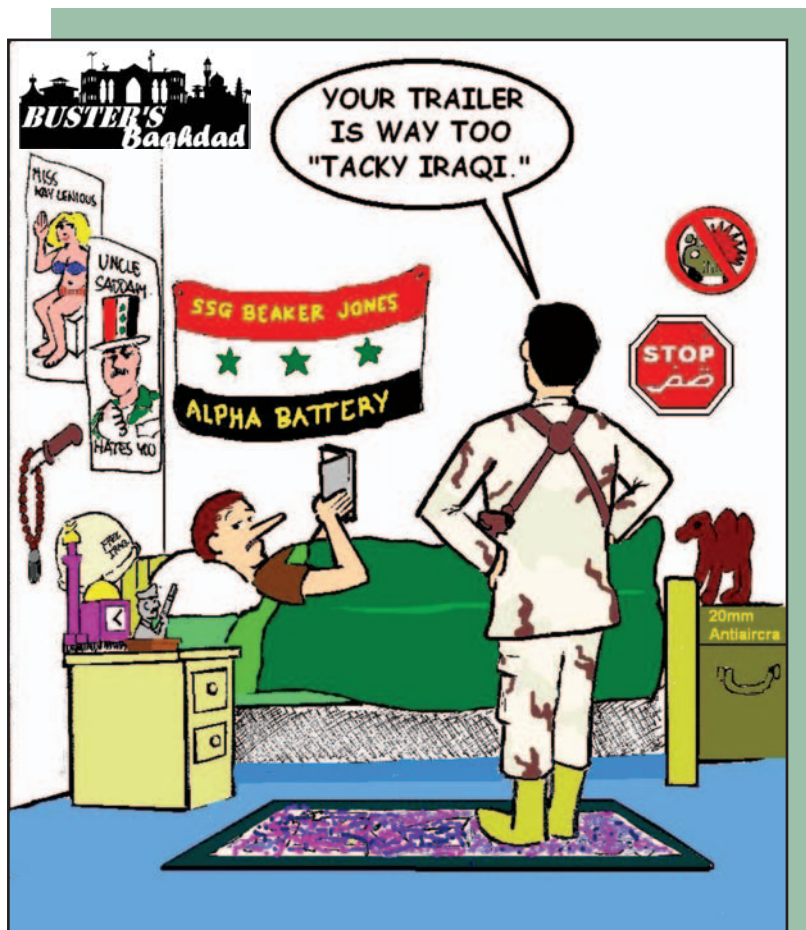
Martinez is charged with two specifications of premeditated murder and violations of Article 118 (Murder) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The Task Force Dragon commander, the appointing authority, approved a defense request for the delay. Martinez was attached to TF Dragon on Aug. 20, a subordinate separate brigade of Multi-National Corps - Iraq. He is currently in pretrial confinement at a military confinement facility in Kuwait.

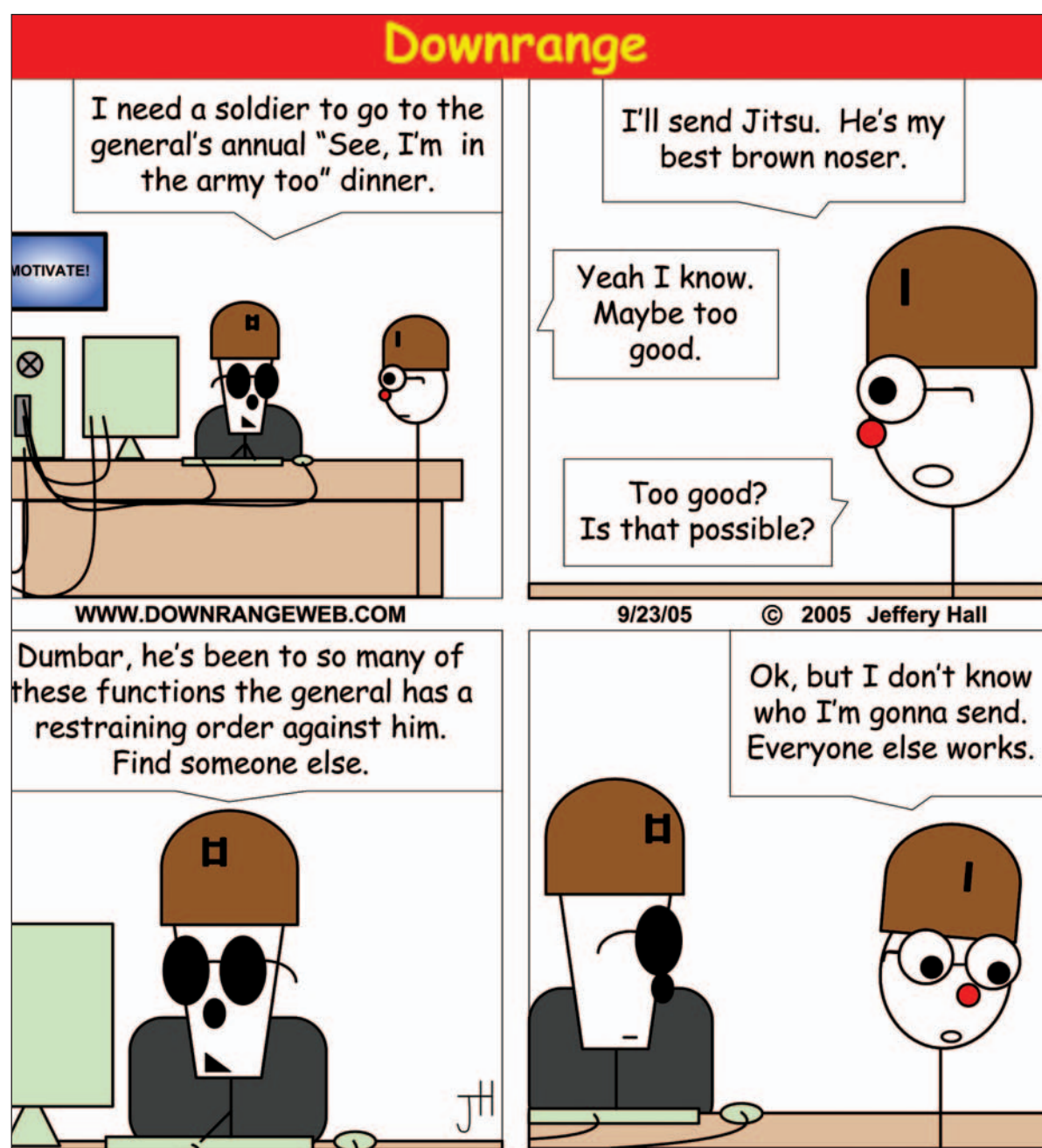
Scimitar Slapstick



Art by Staff Sgt. Timothy Lawn



Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree



Art by Jeffery Hall

Story, photo, art and comic submissions are welcome! Please send to the *Scimitar* for consideration at: scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil

Strong Warriors

Soldiers, Airmen flex their stuff in competiton

By Sgt. Jeffery W. Lucas II
145th Support Battalion Historian

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq — Soldiers from the 116th Brigade Combat Team and Airmen from the 506th Air Expeditionary Group here recently participated in a competition of strength and endurance as part of the first Strong Warrior Competition held at Warrior Gym.

Twenty-four Soldiers and Airmen competed in six exhausting individual and team events. The competition consisted of events with such names as the Iraq carry and farmer's carry, to more conventional names like Humvee pull, hammer throw, overhead press and tire flip. The teams improvised on the use of equipment, using a Humvee instead of a truck for the vehicle pull, a Humvee spring instead of a hammer and a 110-pound map of Iraq.

Team "The Big Show," consisting of members of Task Force 3/116 Armor and 145th Support Battalion, started strong by taking the first event, winning the Humvee pull by pulling the work vehicle 75 feet in 13.43 seconds. The second event, the tire flip, required that the iron men competitors flip a Light Mechanized Tactical Vehicle tire end over end for a distance of 50 feet.



Soldiers from the 116th Brigade Combat Team pull a Humvee during the recent "Strong Warrior" competition at FOB Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

Challengers had to flip the tire from the starting line to the finish line as fast as possible.

Staff Sgt. William Tompkins of Company B tied for second place in the farmer's carry, an event in which participants had to carry two iron rims weighing approximately 95 pounds each for one

minute. Tompkins carried the two rims for a distance of 400 feet.

The hammer throw was next, a feat which requires both strength and precision. A Humvee spring was thrown backward over the heads of the competitors. Getting the distance necessary to win the event required the strong men to release the spring just at the precise moment in order to maximize distance and minimize height.

The Iraq carry was a uniquely "Iraq" event with contestants carrying an unusual steel weight the shape of a map of Iraq. Soldiers and Airmen had to carry the 110 pound map of Iraq as far as they could in a set time.

The overhead press was just that: a competition to see how much weight the contenders could lift over their heads. Spc. Jeffrey Staley from B Co., 145th SB, placed fourth in the event with a 225-pound lift and a weight score calculation of 130.7. Scoring in the competition was based on a calculation of weight of the contestants versus the weight they were able to press.

"This is one of the best events we have ever had," said Brian Lopez, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Coordinator for KBR. "Five or six Soldiers said that this is the best time they had since being in Iraq," Lopez added.

Soldiers build playground equipment for orphanage

Soldiers from TF 2/116 Armor swing Iraqi children after installing their new swing set at the orphanage in Kirkuk, Iraq.

Photo courtesy of 116th Brigade Combat Team



By 116th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq — Children at one Kirkuk orphanage now have a playground full of new equipment, thanks to the efforts of Soldiers of Headquarters Company, 116th Brigade Combat Team's Task Force 2/116 Armor, who installed a custom-built playground set recently.

While doing an assessment of a Kirkuk orphanage in March, the unit noticed run-down playground equipment that was inadequate for the number of children. One metalworker in the group, Sgt. Fenton Doyle, decided to use his talent to build new equipment.

"Sgt. Doyle spent his spare time gather-

ing and welding scrap metal, constructing several toys for the children of the orphanage," said Capt. Corey Dahlquist, a Task Force 2/116 personnel officer.

Doyle used old rims and half-shafts from military vehicles to build two spring toys. He built a slide to replace the broken one and a 6-foot swing and swing set using old mud flaps for seats. He also built a set of monkey bars using scrap steel and half-shafts.

"The Soldiers of Headquarters Company painted all of these items and assisted in the delivery and installation of the toys," said Dahlquist. "The local children in the neighborhood all wanted a chance to try out the new equipment while the Soldiers were there installing it. Many of them couldn't wait for it to be installed and jumped right on."

Worship and Prayer Schedule for the International Zone

All services at the Community Center Chapel unless otherwise noted

For more information, call DSN 318-239-8659

Sunday
9:30 a.m. — Choir Rehearsal
10 a.m. — Catholic Mass (Camp Prosperity)
10:30 a.m. — General Christian Worship
Noon — Episcopal/Lutheran/Anglican
2 p.m. — Latter Day Saints
4 p.m. — Catholic Confession
4:30 p.m. — Catholic Mass
6 p.m. — Contemporary Protestant

Monday-Friday
11 a.m. — Bible Study (Fri.)
Noon — Catholic Mass (Mon.-Thurs.)
Noon — Catholic Communion Service (Fri.)
5:30 p.m. — Catholic Mass (Fri. at Camp Steel Dragon)
6 p.m. — Catholic Bible Study (Wed.)
6 p.m. — Jewish Shabbat Services (Fri.)
7:30 p.m. — Prayer Service (Tue.)
8 p.m. — Bible Study (Tue-Thurs.)
8 p.m. — "The Measure of a Man" series (Mon.)

Saturday
9 a.m. — 7th Day Adventist (CSH)
10 a.m. — Catholic Mass (CSH)
12:30 p.m. — Buddhist Prayer
4 p.m. — Catholic Confession
4:30 p.m. — Catholic Mass
8 p.m. — Alpha Course

Daily Islamic Prayer
See schedules posted at prayer locations.